



HP Compaq dc7600 Ultra-slim Desktop

Summary: Hidden in a small ultra-slim case, this computer system has the same power as larger systems and wins our Best In Class Award for value, power and compactness.

Price: \$1242



The HP Compaq dc7600 series of computers are a group of customizable computers systems with an affordable price and the power to be an excellent workstation in the office environment as well as at home. In our case, we received the ultra-slim desktop unit to test and give this system our Best In Class Award for value, power and compactness.

Although this particular model is available as a tower or a larger desktop, the ultra-slim version is great for those cases where you don't have a lot of room to spare. Still offering the same computing muscle as its counterparts, this version is just a bit larger than a notebook although you will still need to purchase a monitor. With a 3.4GHz Intel Pentium 4 processor, 1MB Level 2 cache RAM and 512MB of DDR2 SDRAM the system's performance was rather impressive. Add to that a fast SATA 80GB hard drive and the data processing performance was above average for computers with this combination.



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Our system had an integrated Intel Media Accelerator 950 graphics card, however with the company's web site configuration program you can choose between two faster NVIDIA cards and a

Compaq's normal six high speed USB ports available with the computer.

The dc7600 ships with Windows XP Professional, although you can save a few dollars by going with the Home version. If you prefer a Linux based system, HP offers this computer with the HP Compaq dc7600 Alternate OS called FreeDOS. Productivity software isn't included with the base system but the configuration program gives you a wide selection of packages that can be installed on the shipped system.

When you need the computing power for business applications in a work environment, the Hewlett Packard Compaq dc7600 system offers great space savings and excellent performance. This particular computer is priced on the company's web site for around \$1240. To find out more details or price a system just right for your needs, visit the site at www.hp.com.



DVI adapter which will really complement the HP Compaq dc7600. The system uses a multibay for some peripheral items such as our 8X/24X DVD-ROM. As more offices are going with a faster Gigabit network, the computer has an integrated Broadcom 10/100/1000BaseT Ethernet port with options for a wireless hookup if you need it. Other peripheral devices can be attached through a FireWire interface and we really do appreciate HP





HP Compaq nc6220 Notebook

Summary: A lightweight and compact notebook designed specifically for business and travel use that wins our Editor's Choice Award for functionality and price.

Price: \$1591



Recently, we've had the chance to review several of the HP Compaq 6000 series of notebook computers and while each of them had their own benefits, they all seem to be geared towards business use with some uniqueness to each model. The nc6220 follows in the same genre offering a light weight system with quick computing power. This system receives our Editor's Choice Award for functionality and price.

Like most of the HP Compaq notebooks, you can configure a model with specific features on the company's web site. You can drive the price according to the extras you select that differ from the base unit. Weighing in at less than 5-pounds and skinny with a height of 1.1", the HP Compaq 6220 is a great traveling companion for the business person.

This particular system starts with an Intel Pentium M 1.6GHz processor with 2MB of Level 2 cache as well as 512MB



It has more than enough for power for use with many business applications that we test with.

of DDR2 SDRAM. Graphics are provided on the 14.1-inch diagonal TFT active matrix LCD screen through an integrated Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 900 card. Although this combination

Wireless capabilities of the system include a Bluetooth connectivity and an integrated Intel PRO/Wireless 2200BG 802.11b/g interface. Additional support is available through a 10/100/1000BaseT Ethernet port for quick network communications. Other features include three high speed USB ports, VGA and S-Video outputs, a microphone input, speaker and line outputs, a replicator port and an RJ-11 jack for the 56K G3 fax/modem of the computer.

The HP Compaq 6220 comes with the Microsoft Windows XP Professional operating system and a few utilities specific for this laptop, but you'll have to fend for yourself when it comes to any productivity software for the system. We think you'll be happy with the price and performance of this lightweight and compact notebook with this base unit starting at roughly \$1600. Visit the Hewlett Packard web site to

see specifics and configuration possibilities at www.hp.com.

doesn't rank it as one of the fastest laptops available, it is more than enough for use with many of the business applications we test with on these types of computers. The display presented an extremely crisp image even at the higher 1400x1050 maximum resolution.

The base unit includes a 40GB - 5400RPM hard drive although a slightly larger 60GB drive is available with the system. Our system included a DVD/CDRW combo while you can select a DVD burner in its place.





Actiontec Internet Phone Wizard

The days of just one phone company are long gone and even though it's been replaced by multiple companies and cell phones, the wave of the future is telephony by broadband.

The Actiontec Internet Phone Wizard is small enough to fit in your palm with the capabilities of an expensive VoIP interface. This device wins are Best In Class Award for originality, functionality and price.

Unlike some of its competitors, this Actiontec product can utilize both landline (with your existing phone) and Internet phone connections without the need of a headset. The device actually notifies you when you're on one line, that a call is waiting or incoming



when you've completed the first conversation.



Whether you're using cable, DSL or using a product like Skype to make your phone calls the Actiontec Internet

Phone Wizard is very easy to install and understand with the software that's included with the system. Connection to your computer and network is accomplished through a USB port. Some broadband companies are offering a device like this but you must sign a contract. No contracts are required with this affordable and compact device that has an internet price of around \$50. Find out more my visiting the company's web site at www.actiontec.com

Griffin PowerPod

Just when you thought you had enough devices for your dockable iPod, all along comes another one. This one however, is handy if you use the MP3 player in your automobile and want to save the juice of the rechargeable battery. Because of its price and convenience we honor the Griffin PowerPod our Best In Class Award for value and functionality.

Although the dockable iPod can certainly take care of itself, this power source is an opportune appliance when going on a long trip. Simply plug one end of the PowerPod into your cigarette lighter and the other to your



iPod via the FireWire cable, and you've got sound, unless your car battery dies - but that's a different story.



Even though we've occasionally had a problem placing devices in our cigarette lighter or they're too loose, the PowerPod fit snugly into the unit and even through a few bumpy roads it never disconnected. Apple charges \$20 for the same FireWire cable alone, Griffin sells the cable and power supply on their web site for just \$24.99. You'll find the PowerPod and other iPod accessories at the site located at www.griffintechology.com.



Nikon Coolpix 7900 Camera

Although this camera may be very small in size, it takes one big picture. The 7-megapixel Nikon Coolpix 7900 produces clear and sharp images that will likely outrank most photo printers on the market. This petite gem wins are Editor's Choice Award for functionality, value and ease of operation.

Features of the Coolpix 7900 include 16 scene modes, Nikon exclusive D-lighting and in-camera red-eye fix, a 3x optical zoom and a rechargeable battery that lasts for around 200 image shots. The 2-inch diagonal LCD review screen was acceptable but slightly washed out in direct sunlight. The 3072x2304 maximum resolution

Nikon



produced excellent pictures during our testing process, especially with the use of the white balance feature and you'll be able to take 640x480 video and sound. The camera comes with 18MB of internal memory, good for about five high resolution pictures but you'll need to purchase an SD card if you want to take any number of images.

Software included with the camera includes PictureProject 1.1, an image management program as well as ArcSoft's Panorama Maker 3. You'll find the Nikon Coolpix 7900 on many internet retailer sites for around \$300. Get the technical specs of this camera at www.nikonusa.com.

Philips ShoqBox PSS110

You might just want to call the Philips ShoqBox PSS110 Personal Sound System the modern-day boom box but with a liking for MP3 media. It's one of those units that you could carry on your shoulder with the clarity and output of its CD or tape counterparts. The system contains 256MB of flash RAM which is used to house MP3 and WMA (including protected) sound files that are downloaded through the USB port of your computer. An attractive display on the front promptly displays the filename (ID3 tag will show name and artist if it's available) along with the name of the upcoming song.

Although it's small enough to hold in your hand, it packs a wallop in volume. The ShoqBox PSS110 is also a timepiece,

PHILIPS



alarm clock and FM radio as well as an amplifier and speaker system for other devices with a line input. A built-in equalizer, with music genre presets, can sweeten the sound to your liking. Philips rates the rechargeable battery at 10 hours but we were able to stretch that out to 12 hours of continuous moderate level play.

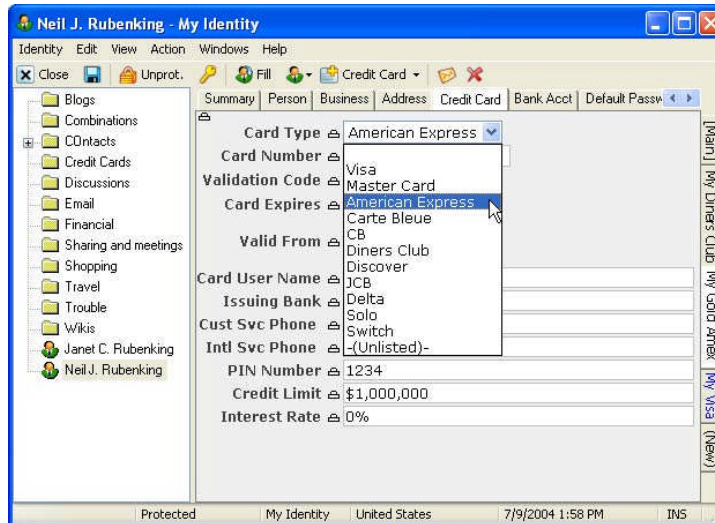
The Philips ShoqBox PSS110 Personal Sound System is available at several large electronics chain stores for \$129.95, but we were able to find a few internet retailers that offered it with \$20 off. Read more about this system at www.philips.com.



RoboForm Pro 6.0

How would you like to be able to store all of your usernames and passwords in one location and never have to worry about it again? RoboForm Pro 6.0 can do exactly that, is very inexpensive and easy to use as well. This software program wins our Best In Class Award for ingenuity, ease and value.

Whether you use Explorer, Navigator or Firefox to access internet pages, the product has been tested with all three web browsers for functionality. In addition to account memorization (passcards as they're called), RoboForm stores the information with two levels of encryption and can generate random passwords so you're



not using the same one at different locations. The form filling feature allows you to enter common information collect at most web sites (name, address, email, etc.) If the program doesn't recognize the field on a form, simply drag-and-drop the information from RoboForm to the web page.

If you would like to take a test run of RoboForm Pro 6.0, visit the company's web site at www.roboform.com and download a trial version. You are limited to 10 passcards and the form filling functionality is disabled. If you decide you like the software, the registration price is only \$29.95.

Salton Beyond Microwave Oven

If you're not the best cook in the world and you feel intimidated by the simple workings of a microwave oven, then this product is an easy way to relieve yourself of that worry. The Salton Beyond microwave oven works in tandem with the company's iCEBOX controller and wins our Best In Class Award for imagination, productivity and convenience.

Because the microwave oven has a wireless connection with the iCEBOX more than 4,000 UPC cooking items are entered into the system. Quickly swipe the UPC code with the attached wand, enter the number of servings and the microwave pretty well take cares of it from that point on. The codes are automatically updated weekly through the Beyond Information



Network and if the product is not in the database, the instruction guide informs you how to enter that particular item into the system for future use.

In addition to the advanced functions of this microwave oven you can still depend on the standard of entering the information manually and cooking the item as you did in the past. You may want to check the company's web site at www.salton-beyond.com for information on the oven and

the iCEBOX controller as well as other home appliances used with the system. The Beyond microwave oven sells for approximately \$165.



Sony MFM-HT75W Monitor-TV

We think you'll be impressed as we were with the performance and clarity of the Sony MFM-HT75W TV/Monitor. This 17"-diagonal widescreen monitor does double duty as a television as well. With a very affordable price of \$539 it wins our Best In Class Award for performance and price.

The widescreen display has a native resolution of 1280x760 and will take up about 15-inches side-to-side on your computer desk. With a built-in NTSC TV tuner you'll be able to watch your favorite programs but you'll need to purchase an HDTV tuner to take advantage of that mode. If you like watching television while working on the computer, you love the PIP (picture-in-picture) feature of the MFM-HT75W. The 800:1 contrast ratio and Sony's XBRITE tech-

SONY



nology produces an extremely impressive image in both modes.

The monitor provides SRS WOW audio with two 3-watt side speakers and a 5-watt subwoofer. Inputs for the system include VGA, composite, S-Video and component RGB while you can use the headphone jack for private listening. When you consider the price of the Sony MFM-HT75W for both TV viewing and computer operations, we think you'll be pleased with the monitor's performance. More information on the system is available at www.sonystyle.com.

Tivoli Audio iPAL

First impressions are not always the best ones. When we took the Tivoli Audio iPAL out of its box, we thought that it was simply a mono speaker for our iPod. Until we actually plugged it in and began to play music did we finally realize what a rich and vibrant sound the iPal produced. It's still in mono but when you're not directly in front of the speaker it sounds better than many high-priced stereo systems we've heard and wins our Editor's Choice Award for quality and uniqueness.

The \$129 iPal does a great job for other devices like a notebook or another brand of MP3 player in addition to the AM-FM receiver for local radio station reception. The unit is around 6-inches high and 4-

Tivoli Audio®



inches deep with a width of 3.75-inches. It only comes in white to match the color of the iPod. The iPal comes with an AC adapter as well as a NiMH battery, which gave us a life of

12 hours of continuous play before a recharge was necessary. You can also purchase another battery, as backup, from the company's web site for just \$20.00

We think you'll be as impressed by the sound of the Tivoli Audio iPAL as we were. More information on this product and others are available at www.tivoliaudio.com.



UEI NevoSL Remote Control

The Universal Electronics NevoSL universal controller is a hybrid between a Pocket PC and a remote control for your audio and video equipment in a home entertainment center. You could say that it's a remote control with brains. Because it is such a unique product we award it with our Best In Class Award for originality, functionality and price.

There's virtually no reason to get out of your easy chair, except to change a DVD, with the NevoSL as it does most everything else for you. You'll communicate between the computer and the device through the remote's built in Wireless-B (802.11b) network interface. The infrared port communicates with the devices as well as other remote controlled appliances. Between UEI's



database and the computer-based configuration program you'll be able to download the latest IR codes to the unit.

The Pocket PC-like product is driven by Windows CE and features a 3.5" color LCD touch screen and scrollwheel for easy maneuverability. The NevoSL has a rechargeable battery which gets a boost every time you sit it in the provided power cradle.

The Universal Electronics NevoSL has a price of \$799 and isn't found in stores. Rather you have to visit the company's web site at www.mynevo.com and schedule a trained dealer to contact you. You'll also find more information on the device at the same location.

VTECH mi6861 Cordless Phone System

If you're in the market for a new cordless phone around the house but don't want any of the extravagant systems on the market today, VTECH has a phone solution that provides features as well as an affordable price. The mi6861 5.8GHz cordless phone system is not only dependable but relatively inexpensive. This product wins our Editor's Choice Award for functionality and value.

A digital signal in the 5.8GHz spectrum provides interference free phone communications from the handset to the base. This VTECH system is expandable with the purchase of 3 additional handset and base combinations (model number mi6820) and offers easy conference calling or intercom services with the other units. You may also choose to purchase a standard headset device for use with each phone. Because the mi6861 uses a higher frequency than 2.4GHz systems, we experienced no difficulties with wireless devices including our WiFi network and visa-versa.

Among the many features of the mi6861 is an integrated digital answering machine with 15 minutes of recording time. You can also choose to utilize the three voice mail boxes so that callers can leave a message for a specific individual and separate access codes are used to retrieve caller information. Each of the handsets has a 50 name phonebook for easy retrieval of frequent numbers and it was quite easy to store

Caller ID information into the system.

Each of the handsets have a pleasant design and style with an orange and black display that lights up when the phone is in use. Battery life is quite acceptable, lasting more than a day of moderate office use even though it is quite easy to recharge each unit by placing them in their appropriate base.

For testing purposes, we were able to retrieve a clear signal throughout our office complex which should push enough power for use in any standard home or office setting.

We are very pleased with the performance of the VTECH mi6861 and the additional handsets as well. You should be able to find the base phone system for \$75 on the internet as well as several popular electronic chain stores. Each of the additional handsets is around \$38. If you splurge for a four phone system it will run you less than \$200, the price you'd pay for some competitor's base unit alone. Find information on this product at www.vtech.com.





VTECH i5871 Phone System

When cell phones came out with picture taking capabilities, many of us couldn't wait to take a snap shot with the camera of our friends so they'd be easily recognized when they called us. Today, you can have that same technology with the VTECH i5871 5.8 GHz digital phone system and we award it with our Best In Class Award for performance, features and functionality.

The i5871's size and shape somewhat resembles that of a TV remote control device. The big difference though is the color screen that's located on the front of the phone. This screen not only displays caller ID information and dialed phone numbers but like the new cell phones can also display a picture of the caller if it's loaded in the system. Pictures, ringtones and Microsoft Outlook contacts can be uploaded to the phone through a USB port that's available on the unit.

The base of the VTECH i5871 not only recharges the battery of the handset, it also has a handy answering machine to record messages when you're away. Although this a one line phone system, you are able to add up to seven additional handsets to the system for easy use by other family members or that are strategically located throughout the office. Each of these additional handsets can share phone book information, images and sounds amongst each other without having to load the data manually. The intercom feature available from handset-to-handset was appreciated for easy communication between individual users of the system. A hands-free speaker produced a quality sound that wasn't overbearing like some phone systems we've used.

Since this is a digital communications device, we experienced no break-up but rather a consistent signal during our testing period. The 5.8GHz signal produced no interference with our wireless networking equipment and the same could be said for any computer equipment interference with the phone's communications. The i5871's signal strength was steady throughout our entire office building and parking lot which should be more than enough for any average residence. Battery life was around two days with moderate use while the base unit and handset bases offer recharging capabilities, but you have to remember to place it back on the base!

The cost of the VTECH i5871 base unit is around \$200 while each of the additional handsets you wish to purchase (i5808) is \$100. This is a reasonable price for the functionality, expandability and features of the phone system and you can read up on the device at www.vtech.com.



The Complete System

vtech

